This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

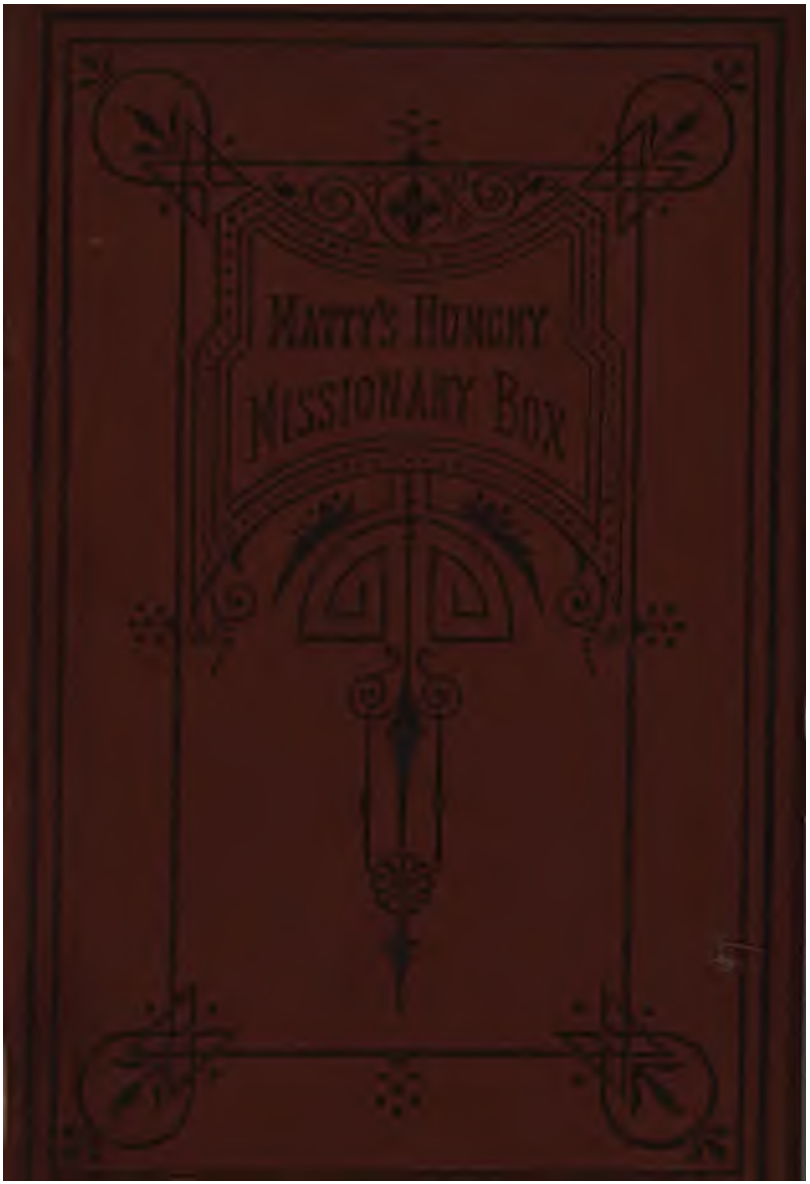
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`


Matty's Hungry
Missionary Box

1489

MATTY'S
HUNGRY MISSIONARY-BOX.

MATTIE'S HUNGRY MISSIONARY BOX

T. NELSON AND SONS.
LONDON, EDINBURGH AND NEW YORK.

MATTY'S

HUNGRY MISSIONARY-BOX,

AND

THE MESSAGE IT BROUGHT.

A Tale for the Young.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"COPSLEY ANNALS;" "VILLAGE MISSIONARIES," &c.

LONDON:

T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW;

EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.

1871.

Contents.

MATTY'S HUNGRY MISSIONARY-BOX—

Chapter I., ... 1

Chapter II., ... 3

Chapter III., ... 6

ANNIE KING'S QUESTION, ... 6

THINGS AS THEY ARE, ... 10

MATTY'S

HUNGRY MISSIONARY-BOX.

CHAPTER I.

MRS. BRYAN had just taken the potatoes off the fire, and was preparing to lay the cloth for dinner; and Mr. Bryan, who said he did not like to be told what else was going to make its appearance on the table, "because there was a sort of a pleasure in a surprise," was entering the house, after his morning's work as a stone-mason, while he inwardly endeavoured to guess from the savoury odour which pervaded the atmosphere what his good house-wife Susan had prepared for him; and the

grandmother of the family, who had come to spend the day, was doing her best to quiet the youngest child—of more than a year old—who seemed to think that it was time it should be attended to, when pattering steps were heard along the street, and the door was pushed open, and Matty—the baby's brother—entered the room, very flushed, very much out of breath, and with both his hands behind him.

"Father, I've got a riddle for you to guess," he exclaimed, after pausing for a moment to take breath; "you'll never find it out!"

"Then what's the use of guessing, lad, if I'm not to find it out?" replied his father, putting on his spectacles at the same time, by way of helping out his mental vision.

"Come in, Mat, and wipe your shoes," said his mother; "it's too cold for riddles, it is; and the potatoes and something else are better than all the guessing."

"Oh, wait, mother; it's my own riddle: at least, I'm to keep it; at least—I mean to *say, it's to be called* mine—that is, however, *not the riddle, but* itself."

MATTY'S RIDDLE.

Matty's parents looked up with some surprise at their boy's not very connected speech, while his old grandmother nursed his little brother in an astonished, perplexed manner, and, as if to communicate to the restless infant the reason of her bewilderment, repeated Matty's words after him for his special benefit, with little original remarks of, "Bless the boy! the learning now that he gets! In my days there wasn't no new *riddles, baby*; no, there wasn't—a darling.

The wick of the candle like Athens—that was always a plenty—wasn't it, and bless his little heart!"

But the boy grew impatient.

"Father, what is it that always has its mouth open, and—"

"That must be the baby," interposed his mother.

"And is always hungry—"

"That must be you, Matty," said his grandmother.

"No, it isn't;—and speaks, though we can't hear it with our ears—and—and the food we give it goes to feed numbers of other people; and—"

"Stop! that's enough, lad; and it be a riddle sure enough," replied his father; "it be a puzzler—indeed it be."

"I thought you'd say so, father," cried Matty; "I said I'd make you open your eyes quite wide like you do when you're puzzled—you'll never find out."

"The food that goes to feed father goes to feed us," said Mrs. Bryan, with quite a *felicitous adaptation* of the circumstance of *her placing a steaming* dish of stew before

her husband, and thinking it most probable that she had solved a portion of the riddle with great readiness; "it makes him strong, and he works to give us food."

Matty shook his head, but, like a prudent boy, would not give up his riddle without coming to terms.

"Will you give me a penny to feed it with if I tell you, father?" he inquired cautiously; "only one penny?"

Fathers are often foolish with their pennies when the children are concerned; you see, they haven't all the contriving upon their minds to make them go as far as possible; and Matty's father, after fumbling for a while in his pocket, produced one, and laid it on the table.

"And mother, and granny," continued the boy, laying his taxes with great system and coolness, "they've to give a halfpenny each at least, as they can't find out."

But Mrs. Bryan took fright at this period of the negotiation. "Now mind that you're not to be after bringing anything live about the house," she suddenly observed; the very *idea causing* her to stand still with the loaf

in one hand and the salt-cellar in the other. "I'll not have pets any more, lad, that cost ever so much to keep, and are no good after all. Them white mice that came, only two of them, and ate bread-crumbs that was enough to feed any infant as wasn't unreasonable, and grew and multiplied like the children of Israel in Egypt, till there was no biding them; and them turtles—"

"Doves, mother."

"Well, turtles is short for turtle-doves, isn't it? Them turtles that billed and cooed nonsense as was hardly respectable to listen to, and that was always scaring me for fear the cat should get at them—which it did at the last; and the lame dog which had to be kept because Mat had found it out of doors, and which had a family to provide for out in the stables, and wanted to be feeding them off our provisions. I've had enough of live things about the house, to say nothing of the baby, so I'm not going to welcome in anything fresh with halfpence, lad."

Matty listened with rather rueful aspect, *while his mo*ther summed up in one speech *the number* of his departed favourites, in

the selection of which he could not but feel that he had been unfortunate; but, with a conscious innocence of any such fresh introduction, he returned bravely to the charge.

"It's nothing live, mother, though it has a mouth."

"And a hungry one," interposed his father, who seemed to be half induced, as the result of his wife's eloquence, to go over to the opposition side,—"a hungry one, which is more to the purpose."

Matty was half inclined to give up his riddle upon the strength of his father's penny, which, by a figure of speech, might be said to be the bird in the hand worth more than the two halfpennies, which, by the same figure of speech, might be said to be still birds in the bush. But he made one more effort.

"It's nothing live—it's nothing that'll do any harm to anything—it's—it's a sort of savings' bank—I'm sure it is," and Matty's eyes sparkled as the idea occurred to him; "for Mr. Graham said that all as was given *would return* to us with more upon it—"

"Come, come to dinner, Mat," interposed his mother; "I never did, in all my born days, hear a boy go on so about a thing that's got into your head; tell out the riddle, and then eat what's set before you, and have done."

"Then you'll give me the halfpenny, mother?"

"He's a clamorous lad, baby, isn't he?" murmured his grandmother; "he'll not have done till he gets his old granny to help him with her coppers:" the result of which confidences to the baby was the placing by the side of the original and solitary penny on the table, another penny to keep it company.

Then Matty, who had kept his hands behind him all this time, withdrew them hastily, and displaying to the little family assembly a bright, new missionary-box, took up the two pennies which lay on the table, and letting them fall through the money-hole, where they joined company with another already in the same circumstances of *imprisonment*, shook them triumphantly together with an air which said as plainly as

PUTTING IN THE PENNIES.

words that the united performance inside was music particularly agreeable in his ears.

"A money-box!" exclaimed his parents; "why, there isn't much to make such guess-work about in that."

"Ah, father," replied Matty delightedly, "but it isn't just like any common money-box that's bought in shops—it's a *missionary*-money-box; and I begged and begged for it, and Mr. Graham, he said I was such a little fellow for one; and I told him how I *had read* that a little mouse once set a

great big roaring lion free that had got into a net; and that I'd try and work at setting some of the poor heathen free that were all entangled up like the lion, though I was ever such a little mouse; and that I had a penny of my own to begin with;—and so he let me have one. And look, father, my riddle's a good one—or at least it was his—here's its mouth wide open, and it's hungry always, ever so hungry, until there's a penny comes peeping out at the top because there's no room for more; and that's what mine's to do, and—"

"Is the boy clean crazed?" inquired Mrs. Bryan, as she completed the preparations for dinner; "what's he after now? A money-box is a money-box, according to me; and that's one, though it's queer-looking enough; —but what's all this tacked on to it about Mr. Graham, and the heathen, and lions, and such like? It's got its mouth open, but I'd like to know what putting pence into it has to do with feeding ever so many folk besides his whose it is."

"*That's it,* mother, exactly," answered *Matty with glee,* his delight and interest in

his new acquisition rendering him quite eloquent on the subject; "it's not for us ourselves that the money's put in; it's for black people, to buy them Bibles, and to send them preachers to tell them about God, and how they're to get to heaven; and Mr. Graham said that was the same as giving them the Bread of life."

Whereupon Matty's father took off his spectacles and looked at Matty with fixed astonishment; and Matty's mother, taking up the missionary-box, at once proceeded to see whether the pennies consigned to its custody might not be restored to the outer world; and Matty's grandmother confided to the baby that all the new scholaring had resulted in the turning of his brother's head.

"Now mind, lad, you take this box straight back to school with you this afternoon," said Mr. Bryan angrily; "and if Mr. Graham or any of the folks there asks any questions, you just say that I'll not have you be after with providing for black people thousands of miles off, when you ought to be minding your scholaring, and we saving up to give you schooling. I've heard talk of people

taking to these here notions before of sending out word to the blacks in outlandish places that they wasn't to eat each other up, and that sort of thing; and what I say is, it's no business of ours; their religion's theirs, and ours is ours, and I won't have new-fangled notions of the sort put into my children's heads."

"I always say, 'Charity begins at home,'" continued Mrs. Bryan, as with a two-pronged fork she made ineffectual endeavours to rescue the imprisoned pence; "and I'd like to know what we have to do with providing for native sandwiches—savages, I mean—which is all one as good as another; and I must say, I take it very strange of Mr. Graham, or Mr. any-one-else, to be asking poor folks like us to be paying for what we know nothing about; and we, now Christmas time has come round, scarce able to pay all the bills; and the tax-man called yesterday;—why, Matthew, your last pair of boots cost six-and-sixpence, if they cost a penny—six-and-sixpence they did, and they'll be wanting new *soling*, I'll be bound, before you know where *you are*. Missionary-box indeed! It'll be

time enough for that when we've come to be rich—it's all well enough for rich folks, I daresay." And Mrs. Bryan, finding that she could by no means succeed in regaining the pence, placed the offending box high up on the mantle-shelf, and helping out savoury portions of the stew, bid the boy put all the new nonsense out of his head, and sit down like a reasonable lad to his dinner.

But Matty, whose new pleasure had received so sudden a check, and whose little erection of hopes, of which the missionary-box was the foundation, had been tumbled to the ground, could not obey the summons. Putting his two round hands before his face, he leant his elbows on the table and sobbed bitterly.

"O father, do—do let me keep it—and I was so glad—and I'll not ask you for any money—but—but only earn some of my own to put in—and—and mother always is saying how she has to think to make a penny go as far as possible—and this makes it go so—so far—off to Africa—and—and I thought she'd like it so much;" and here poor *little Matty* could go no further. He

MATTY'S DISAPPOINTMENT.

was a little boy—only nine years old—and this disappointment was a great one to him.

"It's no use taking on, lad, just like a baby, and you a great boy now that should know better," replied his father; "what your mother says is true, 'Charity begins at home,' and rich folks may do better than be putting on our children to ask for money for black folk, as are no better than heathen;—the box shall go back this day to Mr. Graham, *as you* say he gave it; and I'd like to know *what way* he'd put it that it's a savings' bank

for us, who don't even get our own back again."

"Oh, I wish he'd come in and show you," said Matty, sobbing less bitterly; "if only he would; it's in the Bible, I know, but I can't think where, about our lending to the Lord, and having it more than back again; —if only you'd let me keep the box, father, it wouldn't do any harm."

"There's no use whining and crying," replied his mother; "eat your dinner, Mat, and be quiet, and after school you bring back the box where it came from. If going to school's to set you up against your parents, it'd be far better for you to be biding at home altogether."

"There's no school this afternoon," replied the boy, with something of relief in his voice; "we broke up for Christmas this morning, and I won't be seeing Mr. Graham till Sunday. There wouldn't be nobody for me to bring it back to to-day."

"Then I'll see that you bring it back on Sunday," said his father; "and I've a great mind to send and ask him for the threepence *back that* won't come out. I wonder

what that's to do beyond being loss to us?"

"Fourpence buys a Testament," sighed Matty half to himself, "and a Testament shows the way to heaven perhaps to five people, and they'll get riches for ever; that's just how Mr. Graham put it."

Mr. Graham had not, however, put the matter quite so curtly and arithmetically before the children; but Matty made the statement in an abridged and succinct form, freeing it from all superfluous ornament. His parents did not appear to hear, and the dinner was silently concluded;—Matty every now and then glancing tearfully at the missionary-box on the shelf, with a sort of desire to confide to it his troubles, and to make it understand that it was not his fault that it had met with so harsh a reception.

After the conclusion of the mid-day meal, his father returned to his work, and his mother went into the back-kitchen with the baby, and his grandmother put on her bonnet and warm cloak and went out, and then *Matty was left* alone with the fire.

I say advisedly "with the fire," because, when we have anything on our minds—and most of us have from time to time—there is something very consolatory in looking into the burning embers, and a sort of companionship in them which is soothing to one's feelings. Matty stood and looked into the fire for some time, until a beautiful cavern with a ship in the middle fell in with a crash, and then he clambered on to a chair, and, taking hold of the missionary-box, established himself upon a low stool, and placing his elbows on his knees, and leaning his head on his hands, contemplated it affectionately and sorrowfully.

Whereupon ensued a silent conversation between Matty's self and Matty's conscience, which lasted for some time, while the short winter afternoon began to close in, and the red fire burned lower and lower, and the heavy clouds that had gathered in the morning began to let fall their burden of fleecy snow till the world without became quite white.

"I'm so sorry about it," began Matty with a sigh; "*I wanted* so to have kept the box,

BY THE FIRE.

ınd got it quite full to give back to Mr. Graham."

"*Yes,*" said Matty's conscience; "but was

it *only* that you might send the Bible to the poor heathen that you asked for the box, Matty?"

"Well, I *did* care for the heathen, I'm sure," replied Matty; "I felt very sorry when I heard of the slaves being beaten, and the mothers giving their babies to crocodiles."

"Yes, you did, when Mr. Graham told you the stories about it; and you felt just then as if you'd have done anything for them; but afterwards, what made you so anxious about your box?" asked Matty's conscience.

"I don't mean to say," continued Matty, rather vexed with the faithfulness of his inward monitor—"I don't mean to say that I didn't think it would be very nice to fill my box before any of the other boys, especially James Smith, who calls me 'little shrimp,' and makes fun of me all play-time; but still I'm sure, all the same, it's mostly for the heathen I cared for it."

But here Matty's conscience became quite bold. "You know quite well, Matty," it began, "that you thought very little about the *heathen* at all; that you wanted to

make Mr. Graham see that you would fill your box first; and that it looked so bright and new that you thought you would like to have it for your own, as a kind of toy;—and you know that the chief reason why you've been so unhappy at your parents not letting you keep it is because you think you'll get laughed at for being in such a hurry to have a box, and then bringing it back directly. But the box shall speak to you itself."

And here Matty's conscience opened the door of his hearing, as he bent down over his new treasure, and for the first time the voice of the missionary-box came to his ears. He had never thought about its having a voice for *him*; though when Mr. Graham had said it had, in what Matty had repeated to his parents, he had thought it a very good part of the riddle, and had put it away in his memory. He had been so delighted with the picture on the front interested with the picture on the fron the native church, with its black congr tion and black preacher, that it had occurred to him that the words print *the top* might be the expression (as *they were*) of what the missionary-b

to say; and as his eye fell on them—and because it was getting dark, and he had to bend towards the fire, and read with difficulty, he did so with much more interest and attention than if it had been broad daylight—they brought a message to Matty's heart to which he had never before given heed, and which, though he was a little boy only, his faithful friend conscience took up earnestly, and made the subject of a fresh application: "*Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.*"

"I wonder why that's written on the missionary-box," began Matty to himself. "Let me think: Jesus Christ became poor—that is, he gave up heaven, and came in the form of a little child—for our sakes, that he might die for us; and so, when we get to heaven, that we might have the riches in glory that Mr. Graham spoke about. But why do they put this on the missionary-box? I suppose to remind us that whatever we give to Jesus, it's all nothing compared with what *he did* for us; and that we ought to

be glad to be able to help to get the news to other folks who don't know of him."

"Yes," said conscience, "that's exactly why it's put there, Matty; so now, remember that pennies put in to try and make more show than other boys, or for any other reason except for Christ's sake, won't be the kind of pennies that the missionary-box asks for." And conscience would have said a little more upon the subject, had not Mrs. Bryan opened the door of the kitchen then and there, and called Matty in to nurse the baby while she "cleaned up a bit."

"There's something queer over him," she said; "he was fretful enough to make one's heart ache all the morning, and now he's been lying as dull as possible. Try and 'liven him a bit, Mat; there's a good boy."

Matty was very fond of his baby brother, that had seemed to come to comfort him when his little sister and play-fellow, Nelly, had been taken away, more than a year before; and immediately proceeded to assume charge over him, doing his best to engage *and* amuse him. But little Willie had *caught sight* of the missionary-box, and

held out his hand for it, attracted by its bright appearance. So Matty gave it to him, and for a time the little one seemed

AMUSING WILLIE.

to brighten up with what he evidently regarded as a rattle invented for his own particular amusement. He was shaking it vigorously when, after some time, the children's father came in from his work.

"The snow's falling fast," he said, "and the evenings close in so early that it's dark before you know where you are. Oh dear,

it's tired I am to-night; but there'll be something to add to our savings' bank this week when this heavy work will be over. What's the matter with Willie, wife?"

"He ailing—it's a chill, I think," she replied; "granny said she'd send some stuff from the chemist's for him—he don't seem to breathe easy."

Her husband took Willie in his arms, missionary-box and all. He hardly noticed his plaything, as he caught the smile which the little one gave as he nestled into his father's arms, who, when he had first been placed there after little Nelly had been taken, seemed to have given him Nelly's share of love besides his own.

"It's to put by for you, little Willie, and for Matty, against a rainy day, that father works," he continued, as the child lay on his arm; "so you'll have to be a good boy. and work for him when he gets old." Of course Willie understood as much of this as babies of a year old ever do understand of the discourses addressed, whether personally to themselves, or, as is often the case, to their being intended for a third person present

on which occasions a baby is well known to be invaluable. But he lay quite still; and when finally laid in his little crib, after the administration of the medicament sent home for him by his grandmother, seemed to doze off quietly.

During the evening Matty cast wistful looks at the hungry missionary-box, lying where Willie had left it on his crib, but judiciously refrained from pleading for permission to retain it, fearing a still more decided refusal.

"To-day's Tuesday," he said to himself, "and Friday's Christmas-day; and father maybe will come to if I ask him on Christmas-day, and then it will be a missionary-box and a Christmas-box as well. At all events, there's till Sunday for him to come round; and if Willie takes so to playing with it, he'll perhaps not like to give it away from him; and on Sunday I shall have another penny to put in, which will make it rattle more. I'll ask my teacher to tell us more about the text on the top of it."

CHAPTER II.

IT was the middle of the night, and Matty had been fast asleep for many hours, when he was roused by hearing an unwonted stir in the house. He occupied a tiny room which opened off from the landing leading to that where his parents slept, and the window of which looked over a field into the more straggling part of the town. The moonlight, reflected by the snow, shone in upon him as, starting up, he listened to footsteps on the stairs, and to the hurried voices of his parents, with which mingled another voice strange to his ears. Then he grew frightened, and stealing on tip-toe to his mother's room, crept in quietly to where she and his father bent over little Willie's crib—always carried *up at night* from down-stairs, and placed

beside her bed. She was crying as Matty had only once seen her cry before, and that was when little Nelly died; and his father was crying too. The strange gentleman had his hand on Willie's tiny wrist, and Willie was moaning, and breathing with difficulty.

"Willie, Willie," said Matty, in a troubled, frightened voice; "Willie, it's me! Look at Matty!"

His brother's voice roused the sick child, and a fitful little smile flitted across his countenance. Mrs. Bryan found no fault with the boy for having come there, but threw a shawl over him; and then, after a minute, it became clear to Matty that his baby brother was very, very ill, and that the strange doctor had held out no hope to his parents of his being spared to them. He knelt down by the side of the little crib, and Willie knew him, and put out his burning hand to play in the tangled curls of Matty's brown hair, which it had been his delight to twist round his fingers in many a game which the two had had together; and then the light fell upon his features, and Matty saw the change on his

face like the change which had come to little Nelly's, and he covered his eyes with the clothes, and sobbed bitterly, and tried to stop his ears that he might not catch the sound of Willie's hurried, laboured breathing, which was even now becoming fainter and fainter.

"Couldn't anything more be done?" whispered his father hurriedly to the doctor.

A shake of the head was the only answer, and they all were still, Matty's sobs only breaking the silence, for his parents had become calmer and quieter; and then little Willie opened his eyes, and feebly stretched out his hand towards something among the clothes at the foot of his crib, with a little child's impulse, even in sickness, for what looked bright and shining there. Matty saw that it was his new missionary-box, that had not been moved from the place where it had been laid aside the evening before; and he put it into his baby brother's hand,—into the little hand which had strength only to hold it for a moment, and to look at it with a smile of pleasure, while *he pointed* with his finger to the bright new

AT WILLIE'S BEDSIDE.

exterior upon which the light gleamed from the candle; and then he let it fall wearily on the coverlid, as he turned on the pillow, and closed his eyelids once more. His brother tried to rouse him again. Little Willie was so fond of him, that in these attempts he hardly ever failed to amuse and please him; but now it was in vain. When he raised his head again, he saw that all present were quite still, and that the doctor had silently left the room, and that his parents were looking sadly and tearfully

into the cradle where little Willie had been —for he was not there now. There was only the frail form and delicate casket from which the jewel had been taken away. Willie's spirit had been carried to His presence who was himself once a little child on earth, and who now gathers the lambs in his arms, and leads them to living fountains of waters in the land where they shall dwell for evermore; and Matty laid his head close by the sleeping form of the baby brother who was now an angel in heaven, and cried till he seemed as if he could cry no longer; and then his father took him up, and carried him to his own little room, where from very weariness of sorrow, he fell fast asleep.

* * * * *

The Christmas season was coming in with joy and gladness; but in one house there were closed blinds, and hushed voices, and a little silent chamber where one and another stole in softly from time to time, that they might look on the placid face of a sleeping child—of a little sleeping child who had, through so short a passage, entered into rest before the toil and care of a troublesome

world had left a trace upon his brow, or cast a shadow over the course of his brief existence.

Matty was broken-hearted at the loss of Willie, and quite unable to control his grief, while, fearful of adding to that of his parents, he hid himself away that he might give vent to it more freely, and was found sobbing in unexpected places by his mother, who vainly told him to "give over," since no crying would bring his brother back. Mr. Graham came the next day, and Mrs. Bryan received his visit thankfully, and seemed to find a comfort in telling him the history of little Willie's brief illness—"how he had been ailing, and with his little breathing oppressed-like—and how then he had become fractious—and he was such a good child in general—and how she hadn't thought nothing of it at first—and then granny had sent some physic which didn't seem to relieve his chest ever so little—and then, that night when John had carried him up-stairs, she had said, 'John, I don't like the child's looks'—and John had come with her to the crib, *and* listened, and at last went for the

doctor, who said it was 'cute inflammati
and there wasn't nothing to be done, illı
was so quick with children—and then—
then—;" but here the poor mother's v

TELLING MR. GRAHAM.

failed, and she was glad to catch the so
of a knock at the door of the back-kitcl
which gave her an excuse for leaving
visitor for a moment while she turned aw
It proved to be a messenger requiring
attention for some while, and Mr. Grał
told her not to hurry, as he would tall

Matty, who had crept shyly and sorrowfully into the room, whither he had been attracted by the clergyman's kindly voice.

Mr. Graham took him on his knee, and did not speak to him just at first, but let the sobs come, which would have their way. Then he talked gently and kindly of little Willie, and began to soothe him with comforting words and thoughts, such as a child might understand.

"He'd mind me always," sobbed Matty. "When I came home from school, he'd try and walk across the room to meet me, and clap his hands—always he would."

"And you were a kind little brother to him, Matty," said Mr. Graham. "I've often seen you playing with him when I've been passing by; and your mother says you were never rough or rude to him. I'm so glad you have that to remember."

"Nobody wasn't never so to him; he was always so good till he was taken ill," answered the boy. "He was even better than little Nelly—she *were* cross sometimes."

"*But, Matty,* dear boy, though it's very

sad, you must think of little Willie *now*, think how happy he must be. He's an angel now, without any pain or sickness, and better off far than when he was here on earth."

"He'd have been so pleased," continued Matty sorrowfully. "I'd got him a Christmas present—a little yellow bird that made singing when you pulled a string—here, I'll show it you;"—and he slid off Mr. Graham's knee, and produced his treasure from a drawer in the dresser. "He'd have clapped his hands so to see it; and it was my own threepence, it was, that bought it."

His friend saw that it was a relief to Matty to tell out simply all the trouble that was on his mind, and looked at the "little yellow bird" with much interest, while the boy, in the midst of his sorrow, examined it with him, to see by what mechanism the so-called singing was produced. But suddenly the flood of grief at the thought that Willie's little hand would never hold it, came over him again, and pushing it from him, he gave way to the *sobs which* might not be restrained.

Again Mr. Graham tried to soothe him with the words, "Think how happy he is now, Matty."

"There'll be more beautiful birds than that there?" sobbed the boy, looking up inquiringly through his tears to one whom he supposed, as a matter of course, must know all about it. "He'll like seeing them."

"Yes," said Mr. Graham; "and beautiful angels with harps, who sing—"

"He always liked me to sing to him," interrupted Matty, who in every picture of the joys of heaven now presented to him selected those which answered to his remembrance of baby Willie's pleasures on earth. "I'd sing 'Happy land' to him sometimes for an hour."

"Angels with crowns of gold," continued his friend, "and fountains of water, and flowers that never fade—"

"He always liked flowers," interposed Matty, "only he pulled them to pieces so; he won't there, though," and a deep sigh finished the sentence.

"*And thou*sands of happy children, who

"HE ALWAYS LIKED ME TO SING TO HIM."

will welcome him among them; and the best of all, Matty—"

"*That's* what I think so about," sobb

Matty with renewed bitterness; "he'll be shy among such a number, he always was. If only I could have been with him just at first, just till it wasn't so strange, I know he'd be all right, but—but—"

The tear was glistening in Mr. Graham's eye. There was something touching in the strong brotherly love, deepened in the boy's heart by Willie's dependence upon him, and he drew his arm more closely round the sorrowful child with the words, "There's One to care for him better than you could, little Matty. Who gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them in his bosom?"

"Jesus," was the low answer.

"And you must remember, dear boy, that Willie isn't a little shy baby now, like he was on earth; he knows far more than the wisest man that we could find; and he's come to learn how much Jesus loves him, and that's best of all to know."

"Will Jesus tell him how sorry I am?" inquired the boy earnestly.

"Jesus will tell him everything that will be good for him to know, Matty; and then *Willie will* learn what he couldn't under-

stand on earth—how it is that he's been brought safe to that happy land. For whose sake is it?"

"Jesus Christ's," was the answer.

"Yes, Matty; Willie will be told what he was too little for you to teach him here—that the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he sees now in all his glory, couldn't be happy when he knew that sinful men were shut out from his beautiful kingdom in heaven; and so, as it was the punishment of their sins that they should die, he came long ago, and was born a little child, and grew up to die instead of us, and to take our punishment upon the cross. If it hadn't been for his great love in doing this we shouldn't be able to think of little Willie as an angel in heaven now."

"It's nice to think he knows what it is to have been a little baby like Willie was," sighed Matty tearfully; "he won't have forgotten?"

"You must think of that this Christmas time, dear boy; don't let it pass away without trying to thank the Lord Jesus for having come to be Willie's Saviour and yours; *for having* for your sakes, though he was so

rich in his glory, become poor, that you through his poverty might become rich."

"Why, these are the very words exactly," said Matty, raising his head with something of eagerness—"that's the very text that's on my missionary-box, and that I wanted to talk to my teacher about. It's been put away now," he continued, looking round the room, "and I'm afraid to ask mother for it, because she said, she and father both, that I mustn't keep it."

"Why mustn't you, Matty? Did they think you wouldn't like to go on with it after the first?"

"No, not that," was the half shy reply; "but they said they didn't see why we poor folks was to mind heathens far away; and that charity—that was what they said—charity begins at home."

"And you, dear Matty, why did you wish to keep it?" and Mr. Graham was glad, for the boy's sake, to see his interest diverted for a few minutes from the subject of his grief.

"I wanted to help the heathen, and—and" (*for* Matty was too honest to keep

back the whole)—"and then I thought it looked very pretty to have for my own, and —I wanted to have it filled before the other boys—"

"And what of the text on the top, Matty?"

"That was just it—I mean, sir, I hadn't thought of reading it until that afternoon by the fire, and it seemed to say—I don't know exactly how to say what I mean—but it seemed as if I hadn't ought to have taken it—as if I hadn't no right to it then."

"Because that text says for the missionary-box what it would say for itself—that all that is put in should be for love to him who gave up so much for us—not to try and appear better than others, or for the sake of soon having a full box. Then comes the question, Matty, Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?"

Matty looked down without speaking for a minute, and Mr. Graham repeated the question. At last came the answer.

"I've thought I did a little yesterday and to-day."

"*And* what has brought the love, Matty?"

His reply was an interrupted one. "I had made that same text out by the fire, and then when—when after that night—I woke up and—and Willie was gone, I thought whether he was gone to heaven—and—and I knew he was" (and his voice became firmer); "I knew he was, and thought why, because he'd never done anything good to deserve it; and then the words on the missionary-box came to my mind, and I thought how Christ had become poor—a little child like him, and in a manger, that our Willie might be so rich—and for me too; and then I felt as if I must love him because it was all done so free."

"It's himself that teaches you that, dear Matty," said his friend kindly—"to love him 'because he first loved us;' and the missionary-box won't have spoken in vain if t reminds you of this. And you must try nd tell all this to Jesus, dear boy;—do you ink you can?"

"I never could till—it was this morning went in when no one knew—I thought rhaps they might have made a mistake, l he'd open his eyes if I called him; and

I turned down the cloth, and then I knew it was no use trying, he was so white and cold—and—and—I hid my face and told Jesus I wanted to—to—love him and go to heaven like—like little Willie."

Mr. Graham's own fatherly heart was overflowing, and he spoke words of gentle comfort to the little boy who had opened to him all his confidence. "If father even doesn't let you keep the missionary-box, Matty," he said after a few minutes of further conversation, and rising to depart, "it won't have been of no use to you. You'll remember what it said when you were in trouble."

Matty sighed an assent, adding, however, "But I think, sir, perhaps father will let me now; he's so sorry; and if I ask him, I think he'll not be angry."

Here Mrs. Bryan came in with many apologies for having been detained. Mr. Graham assured her they were quite unnecessary. "Matty and I have been talking," he said; "and I was very glad to know him better than I can in the school *among such* a number."

Mrs. Bryan looked pleased at his notice of her boy, and said he was a good lad, and minded his book—and she hoped in time he'd make quite a scholar. And then the clergyman spoke words of sympathy, which found their way, as words of sympathy always must, to the sorrowful mother's heart, and bade her join with him in prayer that little Willie's Saviour might be hers and her family's; and went away then, after promising that he, and no one else, would meet them on the Sunday at the churchyard, when all that was mortal of her little one would be committed to the ground.

Her husband came in later. He had seemed to feel the blow even more than she had felt it herself; for, unconfessedly, Willie had, during the short fourteen months of his life, been to him as the very apple of his eye. He had come only a month after little Nellie had been taken, and was so like her, with his soft hair, and large brown eyes, and pretty ways, that he had seemed to occupy her place and his own in the father's heart; and for him he had often toiled extra hours, that the small sum entered in his name at the savings

bank might be increased without Matty's losing anything thereby. And now when he returned to his quiet home, and missed the welcome which his entrance had always called forth from the little one who had by this time learned to clamber on to his knee, he threw himself down and refused comfort.

They were a silent party, though Matty tried to cheer his parents as well as he could. But his father seemed too much wrapped up in his grief to notice his efforts except by saying once, "He's a good lad, is Matty; it's well he's left to us;"—which was, however, some consolation to the little boy, who half feared that his father was too sad to care for him any longer.

"It's Christmas-eve, father," he said, when preparing to go up to bed in his parents' room—not to his own, for that was Willie's now. "They'll be ringing the bells soon; and I saw them putting holly up in the church."

"I'd like to know what Christmas is to us now," replied Mr. Bryan; "*I* have no care *for it,* for one—every day's the same to me."

Matty came and sat down close by his

THE LITTLE COMFORTER.

father's knee, and looked dreamily and sadly into the fire.

"It seemed so different to that when Mr. Graham spoke to mother and me this morning," he said; "it made me feel as if it was just right it *should* be Christmas time now."

Mrs. Bryan looked up in surprise from the sad black work upon which her fingers were engaged. "I don't see that, Matty," she interposed; "that's one of *your* odd fancies. I'd rather Christmas was months off, and we so dull all together."

"I mean like this, mother,—how our Willie's *so happy* in heaven, in the 'riches of

glory,' and with a crown and a harp, and so beautiful there; and it wouldn't ha been so but for Christmas, and Jesus Chris coming like a little child himself; and became poor that we might become rich, a died for us that we might go to heaven."

"If our Willie's not in glory, I do know who is," murmured his father dreari

"But *he is*, father—he is, because Christmas night. *Do* try and feel bett when you think of him there in heaven, f Christ's sake. It seems to have it all the verse that was upon—" (and here Mat paused, as it occurred to him dimly that would be better not to introduce what h been a subject of difference) "in that ver that Mr. Graham said how the Lord Jes Christ became poor—a little child so lo ago, 'that we through his poverty mig become rich.'" And then Matty went to bed, and cried himself to sleep, and y felt a little joy in the midst of the sorrow, think that though he couldn't have a mer Christmas, as he had hoped three days ag *still* Jesus Christ had been a little child, a *knew how* he felt, and would comfort him.

His parents did not speak for some time after he had gone up. Then his mother broke the silence. "Matty's all the better for schooling. Mr. Graham took a deal of notice of him to-day," she said.

"He's a good boy enough," replied her husband; "but he has queer notions. I wonder whether that was his own fancy, what he said about Christmas-day."

* * * * *

The night was very still and calm, and the moon shone so brightly on the pure white snow as to make the outer world most fair and serene, when the old church clock told that the midnight hour approached. And then, very softly, the door of a little silent chamber was opened, and with noiseless tread, as if fearful of wakening him, Willie's father approached the bed where, still and calm as the night, little Willie lay sleeping. He raised the blind, and the moonbeams stole in, as if they too loved to linger while they might around the spot where he lay in such deep quiet slumber; and, as if he could not leave the spot, Mr. Bryan *gazed* fixedly on the fair face which

had for him always worn a smile, and on the clear brow upon which still clustered the rings of soft brown hair, until the big tears, which, in the presence of others, had refused to betray his grief, fell fast over his child's little cold hands. Not for Willie himself—for although he had never taken the trouble to examine the grounds of his belief, he never for a moment doubted that he was happy now—not for Willie he sorrowed, but for himself, from whom Willie had gone; for the home in which his clear, sweet laugh would never sound again; for the hearth which never more would be lit up by his winning prattle;—for these, and remembrances such as these, the father's tears fell like rain.

And then the stillness of the night was broken by the sound of voices not far off. He would fain have been undisturbed, and yet the harmonies were so clear and sweet that they seemed, after a few moments, to chime in with his sorrow, and, laden with comfort, to force their own way into the heart which he thought barred against all *comfort.*

THE CAROL-SINGERS.

The carol-singers were proclaiming, with slow, solemn cadence, the "good spell" of Christmas time, the old story—old, yet ever

new—of the joy which is for "all people;" and, through the calm night, their voices, mingling with the softly-swelling sounds of their few instruments, fell with such sweet music on the ear, that the listener, borne away in spirit by the thrilling chords, might almost have imagined that once again angels had descended to bring to earth the tidings which in the night at Bethlehem had been too glad for mere speech, but had caused them for greatness of joy to burst forth into singing.

The words and the harmonies were not new to Willie's father. He had often sung in the church choir, and had then, more than once, heard them rehearsed previously. But this slight acquaintance with them only increased their power on his mind, as, almost involuntarily, he lent his ear to the solemn strains without, and of which he could now distinctly catch the words as they rose and fell on the still night air:—

"There came a little child to earth
Long ago;
And the angels of God proclaimed his birth,
High and low.

"Out in the night so calm and still
Their song was heard;
For they knew that the child on Bethlehem's hill
Was Christ the Lord.

* * * * * *

"Far away in a goodly land,
Fair and bright,
Children with crowns of glory stand,
Robed in white,—

"In white more pure than the spotless snow;
While their tongues unite
In the psalm which the angels sang long ago
On Christmas night.

"They sing how the Lord of that world so fair
A child was born;
And, that they might his crown of glory share,
Wore a crown of thorn.

"And in mortal weakness, in want and pain,
Came forth to die,
That the children of earth might in glory reign
With him on high.

"He has put on his kingly apparel now
In that goodly land;
And he leads to where fountains of waters flow,
That chosen band.

"And for evermore in their robes so fair
And undefiled,
Those ransomed children his praise declare
Who was once a child."

* * * * * *

"Once a child,"—a child like little Willie, who lay sleeping there so quietly and peacefully, and whose song now blended with that of the children in heaven. His father then, when he thought of what was the ful-

ness of his joy, would hardly have recalled him; for the first time he seemed to realize how good for him was the exchange of the striving and care of "this troublesome world," for the glory of the heavenly one, and the company of the redeemed. And then went on ringing in his ears, after the soft, solemn music had ceased, the singers' words:—

"In mortal weakness, in want and pain,
He came to die,
That the children of earth might in glory reign
With him on high."

Very short is the transition from Bethlehem to Calvary. Willie's father prided himself on being a good Churchman, and was tolerably regular in his attendance at his place of worship, and had over and over again repeated the words, "*By the mystery of thy holy incarnation; by thy holy nativity and circumcision; by thine agony and bloody sweat; by thy cross and passion; by thy precious death and burial; by thy glorious resurrection and ascension, good Lord, deliver us;*" —but never as now, now by his sleeping *child, had* he in any way realized the great-

ness of "the unspeakable gift" of Christmas night, or the wondrous love which had purchased for Willie the entrance into that land from whence the psalm that died away almost seemed his parting message. "In mortal weakness,"—the weakness of a little child, "in want and pain,"—and that for those who had never cared for him; and then—that he might be so happy—in white robes, and with a crown of glory, and by living fountains of waters—a strange feeling came over John Bryan at that moment, an unaccustomed one for him—a desire to speak his thankfulness to One who had so graciously come in the solemn Christmas season, and had opened for his child the gates of everlasting life. Matty's words were not, after all, so far from being true,—"It seems right it should be Christmas time now."

But he might not longer stay, and he rose to draw once more the blind of the still chamber of death, and to look out again over the moonlit field of purest snow. And then its glittering whiteness made him think of the children in heaven, how,

"*In white* more pure than the spotless snow,"

they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; and he looked up into the starry sky, as though he would fain have caught sight of some of the outermost glories of the land whither little Willie had departed.

As he once more turned his glance into the room, it fell upon a little box which the friendly hands that had performed the last offices for his child had removed from where it had lain concealed by the coverlid, and had placed on a small table at the foot of the bed.

The new missionary-box which Matty had brought home in triumph only three days before, and which little Willie had held in his hand, and had played with, and smiled upon. He took it up half tenderly. It was associated in his mind with that last solemn midnight hour, and he felt as if Willie's little hand had consecrated it, and even were it regarded as only a common plaything, had made it henceforth sacred and never to be parted with.

"*Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became* poor, that ye through

his poverty might become rich." The light fell upon the words, and there, by the side of the little one who through *His* poverty *had* become rich, the voice entered the father's heart; while without, the midnight chimes rang forth their echo to the angels' song, proclaiming far and near that for all people the Child who came in great humility at Bethlehem was their Saviour and their Redeemer, even Christ the Lord.

CHAPTER III.

MATTY is a tall boy now of fourteen, and his father and mother have already begun to talk of feeling not so young as they were. But when little Johnny and Mary come home from school and climb about in every direction, or hide under the table that they may hear mother wonder why they are so late, or secrete themselves behind the door that they may give father a surprise when he comes back from his work, they feel young again, without any manner of mistake. And the Bryans' home is a happier one than when first we entered it. The message which the missionary-box brought to them one Christmas season more than five years ago has effected the change *which, whe*never fully and entirely received,

JOHNNY AND MARY.

it will effect; and within its walls there is the blessing of the Lord, which maketh rich and bringeth no sorrow with it.

That same missionary-box stands on the mantle-shelf, looking well worn, like an old friend. Many and many a time, since its installation there, has it been filled and emptied, and for a long time its position as one of the family has been established as completely as has been that of the old clock, or of the portraits of Mr. Bryan's parents

on either side of the window, or of the arm-chair by the fire, or, in fact, of any other household belonging of old standing, from which it would as soon enter into the head of any member of the establishment to part as to part from one of the family.

But, somehow or other, it has never been called Matty's missionary-box—never since that night when by little Willie's hand it seemed to have been left a legacy to his home ere he bade it farewell for the "riches in glory." And Matty was well-pleased that it should be called Willie's; well-pleased that from that time portions of the savings which his father used to talk of investing for his boys to be a nest-egg for a rainy day, should find their way into its hidden recesses; well-pleased that at the close of the Sabbath evenings he should so often say how he wondered that he had ever been able to lie down and sleep when a stranger to the knowledge of Him "who for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich;" and how little it seemed to give a small portion of *our worldly* substance to bring such news

BRINGING THE BOX.

wherever it could be sent. Yes, "the hungry missionary-box" had its first mission to *the Bryans'* home; and its changed

aspect, its kindly atmosphere, the willing ministry of its inmates among those, like themselves poor and lowly, around, all tell that it has not been unfulfilled. Johnny and Mary have quite a little store of pennies, which they hope to put into the missionary-box by-and-by. Their father does not allow them to do so yet, because he says that nobody has a right to put anything in for God who hasn't known what Christ has done for him, and doesn't do it for the love of One who gave up the glory of heaven that we might be saved. Little Johnny is learning to know about Jesus now, for Matty is teaching him,—Matty, whose most earnest hope and aim is that of some day going out to be a teacher of the same good news to black children in a far-off land; and he can sing the carol which every Christmas-eve sounds in the cottage before the yearly opening of the missionary-box, which little ceremonial, for reasons of his own, Mr. Bryan always performs on that particular night of the year. Mary was old enough to guess the reason last Christmas-eve, and brought it out with a little help

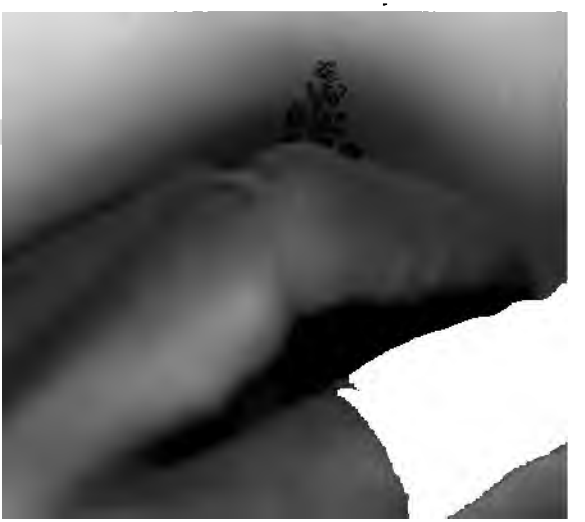
OPENING THE BOX.

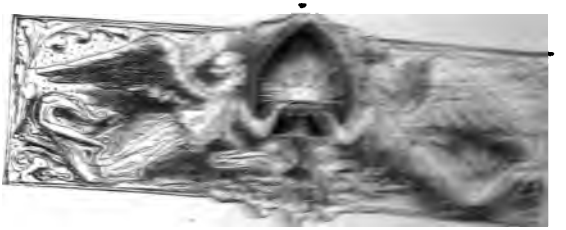
from her brother. For they had been singing how,

"Far away in a goodly land,
Fair and bright,
Children with crowns of glory stand,
Robed in white;"

and she whispered to her mother how she thought father liked to open Willie's missionary-box then, because it was then that Jesus became a little child like he had been; and what went in there was to tell the good news *to other* people, and to show how

much they loved him for having been l
in a manger, and for having died, that l
Willie, and everybody who loved t
Saviour, might "through his poverty bec
rich."





ANNIE [illegible]

th
ne
n at
ey.
them
swered
iss Ellis.
houghts
you all
uses for
ould be
rrupt
lass,

ANNIE AND HER MOTHER.

thing that they might distinctly carry away in their minds; and on this Sunday afternoon the whole class met after school, to talk over the question Miss Ellis had left them to decide.

We will repeat it for our readers before giving them any of the girls' remarks upon *the subject.* The Scripture lesson for the *day had* been Luke xxiv., and their teacher

had entered very fully into the history of the Lord's ascension. In the course of the explanation the question had been given, "How was it that, after losing the presence of their Saviour with them on earth, the disciples yet returned to Jerusalem '*with great joy?*'" One by one many answers were produced.

"Because Jesus had promised to be with them to the end of the world," replied Jane Greaves.

"Because he was to intercede for them at the right hand of God," said Fanny Grey.

"Because he had promised to send them the Holy Spirit, the Comforter," answered Ellen Brown.

"Very good reasons," assented Miss Ellis. "Yes, dear girls, these were the thoughts which made them joyful, and I want you all to remember that the very same causes for joy which the disciples possessed, should be causes of joy to ourselves also."

"Please, ma'am," timidly interrupted Susie Lee, the youngest of the class, "I think I've found another reason."

"*Well,* Susie?"

"I think it must have made them happy to think that they each had something to do for Jesus."

Now it was this answer of Susie's which suggested the question which I have mentioned; for, after having entered very fully into all the reasons given by the girls, Miss Ellis said that she wished them to consider during the week what work had been given *them* by their ascended Saviour; and each one was to tell her on the next Sunday what Jesus Christ had appointed her to do for him.

"I can't think what I shall find to say," began Fanny Grey, one of the eldest of the group. "I can't make out whether I *have* anything particular to do or not."

"Trying to help others; that's something," suggested Lucy Forbes.

"Oh, but everybody's got to do that," answered Jane Greaves. "I think it ought to be something that's given to us particular to do—some one thing, I mean, that's no one's duty so much as ours."

"I wonder whether every one *has* some*thing* appointed that can be found out?"

said Annie King thoughtfully. "I suppose so, however, as Miss Ellis said it. I wonder what we shall answer next Sunday!"

After a few minutes they all dispersed, and Annie went into the house. She lived with her widowed mother, whose means were very small, and who helped to support herself and her two children by going out to work. Johnny was quite a little fellow of about three years old, very delicate in health, and, for that reason, inclined to be fretful, or, as Mrs. King called it, "fractious."

After tea, the bells began to sound out for evening service, and Mrs. King having helped Annie to clear the table, left Johnny in her charge, and, with her large print Bible and Prayer-Book in hand, went down the path leading to the church. It was Annie's custom on the Sunday evening to put Johnny to bed as soon as her mother was gone, and then to learn her lessons for the next Sunday by his side until he was safely asleep, when she would take her books down to a snug little corner in the garden, just under the window of the room where he slept, and where she could hear

NURSING JOHNNY.

every sound should he awake. She had settled it in her mind that this would be the best opportunity for beginning to find an answer to Miss Ellis's question, and therefore was particularly anxious that Johnny should go to sleep as quickly as possible. Very gently and kindly she undressed him, amusing him pleasantly all the time, and then having laid him safely in the little cot by the side of her mother's bed, began softly *to sing* some of her school hymns with the *hope of* sending him to sleep. But whether

it was that certain intrusive sunbeams would peep in from under the blind, or whether it was that Master Johnny was beginning to show that spirit of opposition to the process of "going off," which does show itself amongst children very early—so it happened that he proved exceedingly wakeful. Annie could not get him to lie still or to shut his eyes, which looked provokingly wide-awake. So she gently took him in her arms, and carried him up and down the room, singing all the time, until she was quite tired; but this failed too. He was fretful, and asked for some water, which, as soon as his sister brought, he pushed away, by which means some of it was spilt on the bed-clothes; so that it was not until Mrs. King came home from church that he unwillingly was taken hold of by slumber, and dozed off quietly. But Annie's thinking-time was quite gone. She had not time to learn anything but her Scripture lesson, for her mother wanted her to read out the book she had brought from the Sunday-school library, as her own eyes were too weak to read much in the evening; *and when the* book was finished, it was sup-

per-time; and Annie went to bed that night glad that she had been enabled to be kind and patient with Johnny and of use to her mother, but still saying to herself, that if only her little brother had been rather less tiresome, how pleasant it would have been to have had her thinking-time under the apple-tree.

When she woke up the next morning, the first question which came into her mind was that of the day before, "What has Jesus given me to do for him?"

"I should like to find out something very particular," said Annie to herself; "something not at all common, and that the other girls won't think of. Let me see. There's poor old Mrs. Dale, whose house was burned down last week; I might go and work very hard, and get some money to give to her. How nice that would be! But then mother's going out all week, and I can't leave Johnny. How tiresome it is! If it wasn't for minding him I could do so many things. I could go and read to the old blind people in the work-house, and I could earn money for the *missionary*-box; but he wants so much

looking after, and I can't bring him along with me. I am afraid that I shan't have any answer for Miss Ellis next Sunday. How I wish I could hear Jesus Christ telling me exactly what he wants me to do."

Annie had a little text-book that her teacher had given her, with a verse in it for every day in the year; and her text that morning was, "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as unto the Lord" (Col. iii. 23). If she had not hurried quite so quickly down-stairs, but had stayed to think it over a little, and to observe how, in this and in many other verses, Christ's children are taught to find, in their common every-day employments, the work that he has given them to do in the circumstances in which he has placed them, she would have been helped out of her difficulty; but as it was, she read the verse hastily after her morning prayer, and then went down to get breakfast ready.

Her mother looked tired when she followed her to the kitchen. "I've had but little sleep," she said; "Johnny's that fractious, *now he's teething*, that he kept me awake

half the night. You must mind and amuse him, Annie, while I'm out; for he's feverish and cross. If it wasn't that I can't afford to lose a day's work, I'd stay at home with him myself."

When Mrs. King was gone, Annie had plenty to do. Fortunately, Johnny, tired out after his wakeful night, was sleeping quietly for the present. So she washed up the breakfast things, cleaned the rooms, made her own and her mother's beds, and was just paring the potatoes, and preparing for dinner, when he awoke. And from that minute until night she had a busy time of it. The poor little fellow was ailing and cross. If Annie left him with his playthings on the floor for a few moments, he would cry to be taken up, and would fret for things which she could not give him, although she played with him, and sang cheerily, and did her utmost to amuse him. Very thankful was she when Susie Lee came in during the afternoon, good-naturedly offering to take Johnny into the garden for an hour, while Annie did her work in-doors. And she had *plenty of it*, for Mrs. King had taught her

to be useful; and she had barely tidied away the things, and put the clothes to soak, and mended a tear in the carpet, which was in danger of tripping up every one who walked across the room, when Susie was called home, and her little brother was again on her hands.

When Annie went to bed that night, she was so tired that she fell asleep the moment her head touched the pillow; and the next day, and the next, were very like the Monday, so that when Saturday morning came, and Miss Ellis, as she passed the cottage door, said pleasantly, "Well, Annie, have you remembered my question? I hope you'll bring me an answer to-morrow," she was quite glad that she did not wait for a reply then, and said to herself, "If teacher only knew what a work it is to mind Johnny, she'd see how hard it is for me to do anything more."

Perhaps the young reader of these pages is saying, "I am sure, if I had been Annie, I should have found out long before the work that was given *me* to do!" It may be so; but then you must remember that

Annie, although really in earnest in the desire to do her duty, did not as yet see very distinctly that which the Holy Spirit's teaching was afterwards to show her more fully. Miss Ellis's instructions had been already made the means of stirring her up to a deep sense of the importance of preparing for eternity, and she was in earnest in her desire to find Jesus for her Saviour, to lay her sins upon him, and to renounce every idea of being accounted worthy for any righteousness of her own; but she did not at present distinctly see that it is the privilege of the Christian to do *everything*, however small, to the glory of God, that in the common duties of life they which have received the new life of faith in the Son of God, should henceforward no longer live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again; and it was with the object of bringing this clearly home to the minds of her girls, that Miss Ellis had made it the subject of her parting remarks on the previous Sunday.

Mrs. King came home in the middle of *the day, and* took charge of Johnny, while

Annie finished a little of the Saturday mending.

"Make haste with the dinner, child," she said kindly; "I've a parcel and message to send up to the Leigh Farm for Mrs. Newland at the Hall, and the walk will do you good; you're looking palish, and no wonder, for you have had all the bustling to yourself this week. I didn't like to refuse the Hall work just now, when they're full of visitors, and we want the money; but next week I shall be at home, and can do most of the house work while you mind Johnny."

"Mother," said Annie, "mightn't I stop and see Uncle Stephen? You know you told him you'd spare me when you could to read a bit to him now he's blind, and I could come home from Leigh by the common."

"Do," replied her mother; "just make it as pleasant as you can. And don't hurry, Annie, for you'll have time to look over your Sunday lessons after tea, as you tell me they're mostly perfect now."

Annie started cheerfully for Leigh Farm, a pretty place nearly three miles off. Two of her school-fellows, Lucy Forbes and Fanny

GOING TO THE FARM.

Grey, joined her for part of the way; and very pleasant was the bright afternoon, and the shady path among the trees and through the orchards, and very pleasant the ripe blackberries which they gathered and ate as they talked together.

"Have you got your answer ready for Miss Ellis?" said Annie, before they parted.

"*What* answer?" replied Fanny. "Oh,

you mean about our work. What a good thing that you reminded me, Annie; I had quite forgotten all about it. I must try and think of something to say before to-morrow."

"Oh, I thought of it yesterday," interposed Lucy carelessly. "I shall say that our work is to obey our parents—that's true, you know, and I dare say it'll do."

Annie looked surprised. "I don't think that's the sort of answer Miss Ellis means," she said quietly. "Of course everybody must obey their parents, and it's one of God's particular commandments; but I think our teacher wanted us to put our hearts into finding out, each for ourselves, the exact work Jesus has given us. I've not found my answer yet, but I'm going to think until I do. I've been trying all the week, but Johnny's been poorly, and I've had to attend on him from morning till night. *Do* try before to-morrow," she continued, as they parted; "Miss Ellis looks so sorry when any one seems as if they did not care to think."

With these words they parted, and in

about half an hour Annie was at the Leigh Farm. Mrs. Shaw's pleasant welcome was not rendered less acceptable by the refreshing basket of fruit which she insisted on her taking home with her for herself and Johnny; and it was with a light footstep that she ran up the steps into old Stephen Carr's garden, after having delivered Mrs. Newland's messages at the farm.

He was her grand-uncle, and had formerly been a nursery-gardener in the nearest town of Loughbourn. He had now given up his business to his son, and had returned to his native village of Leigh to spend his closing days, and to enjoy a well-earned season of rest and quiet, after a life of constant and active labour.

Very kind and paternal was his greeting to his little niece, who, throwing off her hat, seated herself at his feet on the soft grassy slope which overlooked the valley beneath; and he listened with pleasure while she told him all the Crossington news, and the little domestic details, in which he took a kind interest.

"*And* now, Uncle Stephen," concluded

Annie, "you see mother's kept her promise of sending me to read to you, so I've plenty of time for the chapter and our talk after it."

"Let's have it, let's have it now," he replied quickly; "it's pleasant music to my old ears to hear your young voice, my child, but it's better still when it's reading the blessed gospel of salvation. Here's the Testament. I was trying to make out a few verses when you came; but my eyes are sadly dim, and even with this large print I could not read except my memory served me to remember parts here and there that I can't see."

"Shall I read where it's open?" asked Annie.

"Yes, my child," he answered, and reverently asked a blessing on the Word. "It is a wonderful story that of Saul of Tarsus, and the more wonderful when we remember that that same miracle which was wrought on him is wrought equally now upon every one who is brought to know the Lord in truth."

Annie slowly read the ninth chapter of *Acts, and* then laid down the book on the

ANNIE AND UNCLE STEPHEN.

grass, and remained silent for sever minutes.

"*A wonderful history*," repeated o

Stephen; "that's the true sign of a soul which has seen the Lord, that its first cry is, '*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*'"

"But does the answer always come?" asked Annie thoughtfully. "I've been asking that question all the week, uncle, but I've not found the thing yet that Jesus has given *me* to do."

The old man laid his trembling hand kindly on her head. "Are you sure you've been looking for the answer the right way, my child? Sometimes God writes the answer for us quite plain, but we don't set the right way to work to read it."

"I don't know, Uncle Stephen," she replied, and told him the whole history of Miss Ellis's question, and of her week of search for the work which Jesus had left for her to do, and how she had been so taken up with Johnny, that she hadn't been able to find it out.

Old Stephen smiled kindly as she concluded. "You've got the answer pretty plain written for you, my child," he said; "but the matter is that you've not seen *plain to* read it. You know, Annie," he

added seriously, "if we're in earnest in asking, 'Lord, what wilt THOU have me to do?' we must be quite willing to accept and act on his answer, whatever it may be. I mean to say that we mustn't choose out something for *ourselves*, and settle that Jesus has given us this and that work which we choose, but that we must look *honestly* about, and take up our appointed duty, whether we like it or not—whether we think it trifling or not —just for the love of him who gave himself for us."

"Then, uncle, what do you think he has given me to do for him?" rejoined Annie eagerly.

"Listen while I tell you a story of my young days," was the reply, "and you shall find out for yourself.

"When I began work I was gardener's boy to Squire Newland—the old gentleman that's dead, I mean. I was kept to work in his grounds. Well, there were several workmen, for it's a large place; but the head-gardener, who was over me, was a good *man*, and a good workman, and taught me *more in a year* or two than I ever learned

from any one else. There was one particular part of the grounds, called the Lake-piece, that was mostly my charge; and I had plenty to do there, what with mowing, and nursing the flowering shrubs, and looking after the plants in the young ladies' plots of ground; while Mr. Robins used to take me into the hot-houses and graperies every day, and teach me himself the nicer parts of the business.

"Well, it happened one May that he was suddenly called away for a few days' business on the squire's account. He was so hurried that he hadn't time to leave any directions beyond saying, as he rode off, 'Mind, Stephen, I trust you not to go to sleep while I'm out;' and then he was gone. Now, if ever a lad cared for the master over him, I did for Mr. Robins. He had helped me forward when my parents were very poor, and hadn't only cared to teach me my trade, but looked after me, body and soul, and kept me to my Bible by example and teaching as well. So, when he was gone, I thought that he should see whether I minded his *word or not*, and I cast about in my mind

to look for something *very particular* to do for him, that should show him how much I was willing to serve him. I puzzled away until I thought of the hot-houses, and I knew that he intended planting out the geraniums very shortly. It was a long piece of work every year, for I can assure you the houses were a sight in those days. But I thought, if I worked very hard, I'd have time to get them all out before he came home; and so I did. I hardly allowed myself time to eat my meals during the three days he was away; and as the Lake-piece was at the other side of the grounds from the hot-houses, I hadn't a minute to spare for looking after it. The other gardeners were busy in another part of the estate, and when they saw me at work, thought that I had orders from Mr. Robins, and didn't interfere.

"The work was done by the Friday night, and I was stiff and tired enough when I went to sleep, I can tell you. Well, the next morning it felt chilly when I awoke, and I began to *fear lest* there should have been a late frost *in the night*. I made haste to the gardens,

and my heart sank when Nicholls, one of the under-gardeners, met me in the avenue, saying, 'I wonder Robins should have told you to pot out the plants this week; there was a slight frost in the night.' And sure enough he was right; half the plants were nipped, and damage done that I could never repair.

"I had no heart for anything that day. Mr. Robins arrived early in the afternoon, and, for the first time, I wished him away. However, I went to meet him at the gate, for I thought I'd get over the telling him at once.

"'O Stephen,' he said, 'here you are to speak for yourself. I've come up through the Lake-piece, man, and it does you no credit; the young ladies' gardens are all in a mess, and the walks want weeding. I could have been certain you'd have looked after your work.'

"Well, Annie, I was down enough, you may be sure, and the more because I'd wished to please my master, and had worked so hard for him. But, however, I asked him *to* come with me, and I managed to get

TELLING IT OUT.

out all the story, and showed him the plants, and told the mistake I had made, and begged him to forgive it. I felt easier when it was over, and when I looked in his face I thought he seemed vexed, but not angry. Vexed, indeed, he might be, for the houses were his pride; but he didn't scold at me as most would, but just turned round and said, 'Stephen, I'm very sorry; I'm sure you worked for the best; but I'd have been better pleased if you'd done your duty well, *and not gone* to do what wasn't your affair.'

We had hard work all that afternoon trying to repair the mischief, and many a sneer I had to put up with from the under-gardeners about people who neglected their own work to meddle with what wasn't their business; but I felt they were too true for me to be angry.

"The next day was Sunday, and, as it happened, the path to church was right through the Lake-piece. I was ashamed to see how untidy it looked, for rain had fallen, and the weeds had sprung up, and my neglect was clear to every one. After church, Mr. Robins called me to walk home with him. I shall never forget the talking he gave me; it stuck by me through life. There was a verse he showed me in the Bible; he said it was one of the saddest he knew—'*They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept;*' and he said this was to be a lesson to me to take the duty God sends, and do it with a whole heart, from love to him who died for us, and who has given us each a work for him if only we are willing to do it. 'I thank you for your wishing to please me, Stephen,' he said, 'it was kindly meant, but

it's our best way to take the duties nearest to hand, because *God always puts our work in the order in which we are to take it up, and, if we seek it, gives us the clear sight to see that order right.* Before we look after the souls of others, we must mind that our own souls are given to the Lord; before we look to out-door duties, it is our proper place to look at home, and see what is the appointed work there. And remember, Stephen, it is the Christian's privilege to take every common duty and employment to Him who has given us our charge to keep here, and to do it to his glory. This has been a sad lesson to you, but you must let it remind you from this time forward that the likelihood is that if we go striking out work for ourselves, and neglecting our proper duty, we shall meet with disappointment, while we cannot expect a blessing. If I had found the Lake-piece in order, it would have pleased me better than anything else; and if you had asked me before I went, I could have told you from the weather-glass that the geraniums wouldn't stand exposure *for another* fortnight.'

"So now, Annie, I've told you this story to show you that when we want to find out what Jesus wishes us to do for him, we are not to go casting about for something out-of-the-way that we might choose, but are to take up the work next to hand, and to do it as unto the Lord, as sure that it is the charge he gives us as if we heard him say so."

Annie had been listening intently.

"Uncle Stephen," she said, "I think I understand you. God has placed me in my home; it is my home duties that Jesus has left me to do."

"Well, Nanny, and what kept you from finding out the particular thing that was to be *the* work when you answered Miss Ellis's question?"

"It was Johnny, Uncle Stephen; perhaps minding Johnny is what Jesus has given me to do for him."

"It is not *perhaps*, my child, it is sure; it is as plain as if he had put him into your arms, and told you to look to him for his sake; and don't be fancying it is too little. I once read of a rich lady in France who

was attacked by enemies, and lost all her money, and was turned into a common servant; but through it all she never seemed cast down, no, not when the drudgery that the other servants refused to do was put upon her. Some one asked her how it was that, in the midst of it all, she sang at her work, and seemed more joyful than any one else. 'Oh,' she replied, 'I think I hear Jesus saying, "Sweep the house for my sake; do this work for me;" and when I remember what he did for me, can I but do all rejoicingly?'"

"I'm so glad I came to you, Uncle Stephen," said Annie thoughtfully. "I shall try and say always, 'Lord, what wilt *thou* have me to do?' and now I've found the answer."

It was nearly eight o'clock when Annie King returned home. Her mother asked her whether she had enjoyed her time. "Oh, *so* much, mother!" was the reply as she went up-stairs to take off her hat. Johnny lay fast asleep in his little cot, and, before she went down to her mother, she *knelt silently* by his side. When she arose,

she had accepted the work Jesus had given her to do for him. The little boy was lying quite still, and a faint flush on his cheek was half concealed by the brown curly hair which fell over it. He did not know how lovingly his sister looked at him, while she felt that he was more closely bound to her than he had ever been before. Her eyes were full of tears as she turned away; and, strangely enough, there sounded in her ears a verse which she had never thought of, and the place of which she could not at first remember; and it seemed to her as if she heard the Saviour's voice, saying, "Take this child, and nurse him for ME, and I will give thee thy wages."

When Miss Ellis, on the next morning, asked Annie King whether she had found the work Jesus had given her to do, she replied in a low voice,—

"I think, ma'am, it is to stay at home, and mind my little brother."

And Miss Ellis thought so too.

Now, dear young reader, let me ask whether *you* have tried yet to find out what your Lord would have you to do?

THE ANSWER.

If not, and you really desire to glorify him who has done so much for you, you must follow Stephen's rule. Consider your calling as a child at home, a scholar, a sister or brother, and taking up the first duties that belong to it, seek to do them to the glory of your Redeemer.

It may seem that "minding the baby," cleaning the house, cooking the dinner, are very plain, common duties; but they become very different when you do them "as unto *the Lord.*" Continually rejoice, rather, that

you serve so gracious a Master, who permits us to perform all our *common* occupations as unto him. Only let your continual prayer be, "Lord, what wilt *thou* have me to do?" and you may be sure that the promise to you will be fulfilled: "*I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.*" Oh, it is good to wake up in the morning, and when we look on to the day as yet unfilled, to remember that "*whether we eat, or drink, or whatsoever we do,*" we may "*do all to the glory of God!*"

THINGS AS THEY ARE.

IT was the old, old story. Father
Mother dead. Two orphans al
the world. A thronged metr
increasing marvellously day by
And a small garret-chamber
midst, its contents day by day diminis
cold, comfortless, bare.

They were not absolutely starved,
two orphans; but that was all.
father had left them a little money, a
the time of his death they had poss
many more articles of furniture.
Hunger is a pitiless auctioneer; and
ten had learned the way to the pawnbro
the path trodden by men and women
fainting hearts and fainting bodies;

Mary had become quite accustomed to her often recurring task of filling up as she best could the gaps made by the departure of the old familiar friends which she now despaired of seeing again.

The winter months had dragged on slowly. Marten went out every morning with his barrow: out on sunny, fine days, when all the world was gay and bright; out in sleet, and hail, and snow, when the wind seemed determined to mock and taunt him for having such thin clothes; giving him a blow one moment; searching through and through his poor, meagre coat, as if to ask whether that was all he had to wear; whistling scornfully in his ears, and then leaving him for an instant to meet him suddenly round the next corner, and in the same rude way.

Marten sometimes wondered to himself why he kept on living. He didn't know what good he was in the world, he said, except that he could help to keep Mary. Somehow it seemed hard that he should have to go day after day on those weary, weary rounds, no matter what the weather might be, while ever so many folk had all

they wanted, and to spare. Why wasn't he like those rosy children who peeped over the blinds at him on wet afternoons; well-dressed, well-fed, and with the glowing reflection of a fire behind them? Why hadn't he a warm, comfortable home too, and plenty of clothes and money? Oh, children of happy, smiling homes, let your hearts be very full of pity and compassion for the poor:—

"While we seek mirth and pleasure, and music light and gay,
There are frail forms fainting at the door;
Though their voices are silent, their pleading looks will say,
Oh, hard times! come again no more!"

So said Marten and Mary often with full hearts. Their best times were when they met at the end of the day, and talked over all that they had seen and all that they had been doing since they parted. Mary worked with a dressmaker who had grand show-rooms up-stairs, and a brass plate on the door, and a whole shop-front of such windows as were a temptation to every stone-throwing boy that passed by. Everything very costly and imposing up-stairs and in *public*. Below, in the work-rooms, pale,

over-worked girls, with faint hearts and weary fingers, whose weekly wages barely sufficed to support them day by day, and who seemed to be regarded by their employer as so many working-machines, useful as long as they worked well, and that was all.

Some of these working-machines had hearts, a portion of their mechanism which had never entered into the calculation of Madame Celeste when she hired them; hearts which sank despondingly in proportion as young, bright, wealthy sisters gave hurried, elaborate orders in the rooms above; hearts which were torn by separation from the homes and the friends they loved, and which bled silently while the fingers of the machine flew over gossamer flounces, and fairy trimmings, and bridal adornments for more favoured wearers.

And some of the machines wore out. Provoking it was for Madame Celeste, who had become accustomed to them, and had a wedding order and a mourning order just at the busy time, and couldn't understand *why girls* should be fancying themselves ill

with coughs, and delicate chests, and pains in their sides. It *was* very provoking, especially when the machine failed altogether; or, in other words, when young apprentices went home to their sweet, fresh country air, only in time to droop with the flowers, and like them to die. Too bad, indeed, Madame Celeste!

Our Mary drooped often, but she did not fail in punctuality or diligence. Only she longed, longed thirstingly for the end of the day, when she might exchange the confined atmosphere of the closest of the work-rooms for the less impure air of the streets, and the cramped posture of the needle-woman for an interval of freedom. She was regarded as the lowest of the workers in the establishment; her youth, and poverty, and what the others called "want of style," bringing down no small amount of cool contempt from those who considered themselves "young ladies." Indeed, had Madame known what Mary's home was now, she would have at once ceased to employ any one belonging to so *poor a dwelling*. But it did not occur to

her to inquire what became of the machines out of working hours; so Mary and Marten went on day by day as best they could, and were thankful when their joint earnings made up sufficient to keep them for a week without the necessity of pawning more of their little stock of furniture.

It was Saturday night, and the embers were burning low in the grate, and Marten was fast asleep on his low tressel-bed in one corner of the room. Mary was as tired, but she always sat up on Saturday nights to put her own clothes and Marten's in the best repair she could, before creeping into a little curtained-off portion of the chamber, which she called her room.

Because Sunday was coming,—Sunday, Mary's best day, when she would try and forget all the cares and the hard times here, and would look upwards and onwards to what is coming for the Lord's children in "the land very far off,"—Saturday night mendings often brought happy thoughts to Mary; but it didn't seem like it on this night. On the contrary, the calm, sweet smile, which had been on her lips while

Marten read her a few verses before going to bed, had vanished. As her needle flew in and out more and more swiftly, the tears seemed as if they would take advantage of the opportunity to fall on the coarse black frock in her lap, until Mary's eyes were very blind and dim, and the work suddenly ceased that she might cover her face with her hands as if to drive back the choking sobs.

It was not often that Mary murmured, but there was murmuring in her heart then. "Why do I go on like this week after week?" was the language of her thoughts. "I'm sick of working, I'm tired of being looked down upon by finer dressed girls, because my clothes are wearing out. My heart, my heart's wearing out. It seems as if we were never to be cared for in the world; and we might get on—only we're honest. Why doesn't Marten's barrow fetch as much as others? Only because he won't sell bad fruit for good, and stale for fresh. And I—there's many a girl wearing *gay* clothes and never wanting—no, I'll *keep honest*, I'd rather die than be like

them; but oh, father, mother, why did you die? Why doesn't any one care for us now?

"I know it's wrong—I mustn't think so—I'm trying to serve Jesus—I'm his child. But it doesn't seem as if he knew about me. People who don't love him seem to get on best. Oh, how is it? Is it all true what the Bible says about his caring for the poor and needy? Does he care for me as he says—for me—"

And then a sudden change came over the face of the young girl—a change as if some one had whispered words of hope into her ear. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," she said, almost aloud. "I am poor and needy, but the Lord thinketh on me; yes, on *me*. I won't doubt him, oh, I *can't* doubt him who gave his life for the sheep. I know he loves me though I am so weak and murmuring. The world seems too hard a puzzle for me, but it must be right, as he orders it;" and Mary dashed away the tears, and sang softly, for there was no fear of waking Marten,—

"Breast the wave, Christian,
When it is strongest;
Watch for day, Christian,
When the night's longest.

"Onward and upward still
Be thine endeavour;
Jesus has loved thee—
He loves thee for ever."

Mary didn't want more than that—"He loves thee for ever." It was quite enough to answer all the sore doubts. The tears came again now, but not as before. It seemed as if the same fountain *had* sent forth sweet waters and bitter, for these were something like the tears with which one of old washed the Lord's feet—tears of love and humility as she clung to the Saviour and heard him say, "Go in peace."

And then, after a little while in which she had sat with a small clasped book on her knee, all seemed changed to Mary. Everything around her seemed to fade away in a cloudy mist, and when the mist had dispersed, she was walking in the thronged streets which she had been treading a few hours before, and looking round wonderingly at what seemed the same and *yet utterly* different.

Utterly different, though others did not appear to find it so. But Mary held to her eyes a glass which had been given her, she knew not how, with the injunction to look around her only through its medium; and as she looked, she thought she heard a voice saying in her ear, "God seeth not as man seeth. The things which are seen are temporal. The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are not of the Father, but of the world; and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof. Look, Mary, at things as they *are*, not as they *seem*."

Changed indeed were the old familiar places. There were stately mansions on one side, which Mary had often passed by with a throb of envy; and now they appeared mean and poor, falling often into ruins, and destitute of any beauty or grandeur.

On the other hand were the usually sparkling shops, whose windows were wont to be gay with all manner of costly silks, and rich tapestried stuffs. But as Mary saw them now, these looked like crumbling

tinder, moth-eaten and worthless; and instead of the showy labels usually attached to them, were inscribed these words:—"*Your gold is corrupted; your garments are moth-eaten. The fashion of this world passeth away.*"

Wonderingly she pursued her way, and in the glittering store-houses where jewels of silver and jewels of gold had continually attracted her marvelling gaze, she saw a few rusted, worthless articles with the inscription, "*Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.*"

But suddenly a more fearful sight than all broke upon Mary's view as she tightened the grasp with which she held the glass to her eyes. It was that of a lofty building whose glaring lights and thronged entry had continually attracted her notice as she passed daily to and fro. Now sounds as of hellish cries resounded from it. She felt impelled to look in, and there, where hundreds were flocking, were written the words, "THE WAY TO HELL." And on casks from whose contents even the women and children were

eagerly drinking, were written, "Poison for body and soul!" "Ruin." "Death." "Destruction." And behind, there was a yawning place from which red flames were every now and then issuing; and the very flames seemed to form themselves into the words, "*Woe unto them that.....follow strong drink! neither fornicators,.....nor drunkards, nor revilers shall inherit the kingdom of God.*" And as if she had looked through the very gates of hell, Mary fled back affrighted and was out once again in the open street.

She was just beginning to find out many strange things concerning the thronging crowds who passed by, when further on she saw a bright pure light shining out on the darkest corner of the way—a light so serene that she hastened her steps till she reached the spot. And there, giving forth as it were rainbow rays of brightness, were displayed, in the window of a small, unpretending building, precious books which seemed to be set with gold and jewels. Over them was written as with the pencil of a sunbeam, "*The word of the* LORD *endureth for ever.*" "Why, it's the *little* Bible shop by the church!" ex-

claimed Mary, "but it's all changed." And then she looked yet more wonderingly at the golden letters which shone forth from every open page. And there was one sparkling motto :—"*The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold.*" And another shone out more gloriously still, even as if each letter had been formed with diamonds and emeralds,—"*God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;*" and this seemed to light up all the rest, besides that they each had their own peculiar brightness: and it brought out yet more gloriously the words which sparkled forth from the open page of another of the holy books; and they were these,—"*My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*" And the glittering rays were then reflected by some*thing* very glittering too in Mary's eyes, as

she thought of the Great King who had treasures at his right hand for her, and whose servant she was, and who would love her for ever.

And once again she turned back into the streets. And then she saw how different all the people looked. The greater number were in rags and garments so filthy that she wondered they could keep them together. Many were quite naked. Others were blindly groping their way. Suddenly she started as she recognized amongst these meanly-clad persons, lords and ladies, wealthy frequenters of the palaces and the store-houses of the city. They seemed unconscious of their tattered condition, and occupied in coming and going without any apparent object, though there were laughter and song among them, which sounded discordantly on her ears. She wondered what this should signify, when there passed by one of fair and far different mien. Her garments were spotless as the snow, and rich with draperies of gold. There was a coronet on her brow, and an ornament of such lustre clasping the mantle on her breast, that, seen in certain lights, it

showed all the colours of the rainbow. And in her hand was a precious parchment inscribed with letters similar to those of the holy books; and outside of it was written, "*Title-deeds of the kingdom.*" Then Mary marvelled as she recognized in the face, transformed though it was, that of the lame apprentice who sat beside her day after day in the work-room—the only witness for Jesus who had ever joined with her in upholding his name amongst the giddy number, to whom it was of little worth. And there she walked on now, so brave and calm; and the same voice which had spoken to Mary, now whispered in her ear, "The King's daughter is all glorious within; her raiment is of wrought gold. She hath washed her robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and she hath the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. When the day of the Lord cometh, she shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of her Father."

And then Mary saw more of these shining *ones* passing on among the crowd, mocked *at and* persecuted by many, but calm and

serene, as became their royal birth and a coming kingdom. The old widow—bed-ridden for many years—who lived in the same street, was among them, and shone as a King's daughter now. And the poor, deformed carpenter, with whom Marten often spent a spare minute watching his trade, had a glorious robe too; and looked up with head erect, and sang out gladly. Mary thought his song beautiful,—

> "Happy day! happy day!
> When Jesus washed my sins away!
> He taught my heart to watch and pray,
> And he supports me every day.
> Happy day! happy day!
> When Jesus washed my sins away!"

The people round couldn't understand his language, and laughed at him; and then Mary saw that they thought themselves as well-dressed and grand as he, and knew not that they were poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, with their very righteousness as filthy rags, and they themselves guilty before God; for "the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints."

She was wondering at the little number of *those* that wore the fine linen and the

white robes, when, as she pursued her way, she saw that though so many of the mansions which she had always called great and grand were now as the meanest hovels, there were buildings which, even through her glass, looked fair and well. There was a light on the Orphan Home, and on the hospital where her mother had died; and it seemed as if ministering spirits were crowding there to comfort the heirs of salvation within. And while the walls of many a wealthy house, whose owner had become rich through usury and wrong, seemed to have been built up with broken hearts and ruined souls, on many of the stones which sparkled out here were inscriptions such as these:—"*The offering of a free heart;*" "*Of thine own have I given thee;*" "*If Christ have so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*" And light shone out, too, from some of the churches—a dim, uncertain gleam from many, but a flood of radiance from others. And among these last was Mary's own dear church; and she knew *why this* was so, for she had seen her *minister* among the white-robed number, and

she knew that he had the word of the most high God on his lips.

And suddenly Mary found herself, she knew not how, in the churchyard. And she looked for the grave where her mother lay; but it was bright with flowers, and everlasting had formed itself into wreaths around it. And then she once more heard the voice bidding her not to seek the living among the dead. And lifting up her glass, she caught a distant glimpse of a multitude which no man could number—a glorious company with palms in their hands; and she thought she could distinguish her mother's form among the throng, and could almost catch the strains of the song of triumph, when—

When she started up suddenly to find herself waking in the cold garret, her Bible and the old black frock in her lap, and the dim candle burning out, and Marten rousing up for a moment with the words, "Why, Mary, you're talking in your sleep; what's the matter?"

Mary could not think of any answer but the true one,—"I must have gone off to *sleep while* I was getting my Sunday lesson,

Marten. It's all about that verse, 'We walk by faith, and not by sight.'" But Marten was asleep again, and then his sister knelt down for a few minutes, and it seemed to her that everything must be right now, for was she not a King's daughter? "The little garret must have the light upon it always," she said; and then she washed her robes quite white in the blood of the Lamb. And on the next day she went forth with a firmer, braver step than ever, when she thought of the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled reserved in heaven for her, and of the riches in Christ Jesus, and of the crown of glory fading not away.

Whenever murmuring thoughts came again to Mary's heart, she remembered the glass of faith which seemed to have been lent to her on that dark Saturday night. And she would put such thoughts away by singing,

"Happy day! happy day!
When Jesus washed *my* sins away."

And we, in trouble and gladness, will do well *to seek more* continually to walk by faith, *and not by* sight, even though we but see

through the glass darkly. Oh, could we but for one short hour behold all things here, not as they *seem*, but as they *are*, we who are the children of the kingdom would lift up our heads with joy unspeakable, counting all earthly gain but loss, all earthly loss as not to be made mention of, knowing that our redemption draweth nigh :—

> "Soon, soon the whole,
> Like a parchèd scroll,
> Shall before our amazèd sight uproll;
> And without a screen
> At one burst be seen,
> The Presence wherein we have *ever* been."

One there was in olden time who was sorely perplexed when he saw the prosperity of the wicked, and beheld how the ungodly prospered in the world and increased in riches. And when he thought to know this, it was too painful for him; until he went into the sanctuary of God. Then understood he their *end*. And often nowadays do the weary ones of this world's highway feel the same sore bewilderment, and almost unwittingly exclaim, "It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance?" And in times like these it is

that we must lift up our eyes unto him from whom cometh our help, and seek to look through the clear glass of faith, and to behold all things here in the true light of Eternity. And as it was with the Psalmist of old, so it will ever be now, that the true in heart, thus looking round upon the fading show of this world's glory, will be enabled exultingly to look onward to a glory which shall never fade, with his trustful song,—"Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."